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General and complete disarmament: assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/38 C of 9 December 1997, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to examine the issue of assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them. In the same resolution, the Secretary-General was also encouraged to continue his efforts, in the context of the implementation of resolution 49/75 G of 15 December 1994 and of the recommendations of the United Nations advisory missions, to curb the illicit circulation of small arms and to collect such arms in the affected States that request it. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its fifty-third session. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. It will be recalled that in his previous report (A/52/264), the Secretary-General welcomed the attention the General Assembly has been devoting to this important subject, which affects the stability of many countries. Since the issuance of that report, several initiatives have been taken at the subregional, regional and international levels to address the issue of the illicit traffic in small arms.

II. Further developments

A. Moratorium on light weapons in West Africa

3. During 1997, further progress was made on a proposed moratorium on the manufacture, import and export of light weapons in West Africa. The proposal was first discussed in November 1996 at an international conference on conflict prevention, disarmament and development in West Africa, held in Bamako, in which the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) participated.

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In March 1997, the proposal was a subject of discussion at ministerial-level consultations held in Bamako. The consultations were observed by the Centre for Disarmament Affairs.

4. Pursuant to a request of the ministerial meeting of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Yamoussoukro on 12 March 1998, the ECOWAS secretariat was given the task of preparing a draft text for a declaration of the proposed moratorium. On 1 and 2 April 1998, at the initiative of the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers and UNDP, representatives of 13 ECOWAS member States met in Oslo together with those of arms-exporting States, the Department for Disarmament Affairs and other United Nations bodies and observer Governments and non-governmental organizations. On that occasion, the President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konaré, elaborated upon the proposal for a moratorium on small arms in West Africa. The participants considered the subregional initiative of the ECOWAS States to be an important contribution towards strengthening the resolve of the United Nations to prevent the excessive accumulation, proliferation and use of small arms in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 50/70 B of 12 December 1995 and 52/38 J of 9 December 1997.

5. The proposed moratorium is essentially a confidence-building measure. It would include weapons such as handguns, rifles, machine guns, landmines, grenades, portable rocket launchers and mortars as well as their ammunition. The moratorium would initially be a declaratory measure of a duration to be determined by the participating States, with the prospect of being extended at the end of that period.

6. Member States of ECOWAS emphasized that a voluntarily imposed moratorium had not been attempted before on a subregional basis. Another novel feature of the proposal is a dialogue between recipients and suppliers of arms – asking the latter to respect the provisions of the moratorium and to assist in its implementation. The objective is to create a framework within which a secure environment for socio-economic development can be obtained. The moratorium would be shaped with due regard to the legitimate defence needs of the countries concerned, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

B. Report of the Secretary-General on Africa

7. In paragraph 27 of his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318), the Secretary-General noted that African States could help to diminish the need for large military expenditures by implementing transparency and confidence-building measures in the military and security fields, including the harmonization of policies against illicit arms trafficking.

8. In paragraph 28 of the report, the Secretary-General further noted that identifying the sources of arms flows into Africa was critical to any effort to monitor or regulate that trade. He stated that there was a need to pay particularly close attention to the role of private arms merchants in supplying weapons to areas of actual or potential conflict. The goal of public identification of international arms merchants and their activities had proved elusive, but perhaps no other single initiative would do more to help combat the flow of illicit arms to Africa. The Secretary-General noted that the Security Council should address itself to that issue as a matter of urgency, including the role the United Nations might play in compiling, tracking and publicizing such information.

9. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of its resolution 1170 (1998) of 28 May 1998, the Security Council decided to establish, for a period of six months, an ad hoc Working Group comprising all members of the Council to review all recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General as they related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

10. The ad hoc Working Group was requested, in pursuance of resolution 1170 (1998), to prepare a framework for the implementation of the recommendations and to submit specific proposals for concrete action for consideration by the Security Council by September 1998. To carry out that responsibility, the ad hoc Working Group established, on 8 July 1998, six thematic subgroups, one of which will make proposals on implementing the following recommendation stemming from the report of the Secretary-General to address urgently the question of arms flow (particularly information on suppliers and intermediaries) and consider what role the United Nations might play in compiling, tracking and publicizing such information.

C. Requests for United Nations assistance to curb the illicit circulation of small arms and to collect such arms in the affected States

11. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 52/38 C, the Secretary-General has received two requests for United Nations assistance to curb the illicit circulation of small arms and to collect such arms in the affected States.

1. Niger

12. By a letter dated 11 June 1998 addressed to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Government of Niger transmitted two documents of its National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Arms. The letter referred to General Assembly resolution 51/45 L of 10 December 1996, emphasizing that the Assembly had encouraged countries of the Saharo-Sahelian subregion to establish national commissions against the proliferation of small arms. The National Commission in Niger, which was established in 1994, has developed a programme for weapons collection and needs technical and logistical support, as well as financial assistance, to implement it. It is estimated that since 1994 more than 3,500 weapons have been collected, and the Government would like to collect roughly 2,000 more.

13. The Secretariat will be consulting with the Niger authorities on their request for assistance.

2. Albania

14. By a letter addressed to the Secretary-General dated 27 February 1998, the Government of Albania requested him to send an expert to Albania, at his earliest convenience, in order to evaluate the situation with the aim of developing a buy-back programme for the disarmament of the civilian population. The letter stated that the disarmament of the population was one of the most important steps towards establishing order and security in the country and also preventing a spillover effect in the region. It was mentioned that during the crisis that engulfed Albania in 1997, thousands of weapons had fallen into the hands of the civilian population.

15. Headed by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, the evaluation mission, comprising officials of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, visited Albania from 11 to 14 June 1998. The objective of the mission was to make a preliminary evaluation of the situation in the country and to assist the Government of Albania in developing a programme of retrieving and collecting weapons from the civilian population.

16. The report of the evaluation mission contains a number of findings and recommendations. Among its findings are the following:

(a) An estimated 650,000 weapons were either taken away from military depots or given out to civilians during the 1997 crisis in Albania along with 20,000 tons of explosives and 1.5 billion bullets and artillery shells;

(b) Since the number of weapons in question is large by any estimate, cash incentives or buy-back schemes would have an inflationary impact in addition to sending out the wrong message to those who might consider unauthorized weapon possession a lucrative activity;

(c) There is a broad-based national consensus in Albania that United Nations involvement would be helpful in retrieving the huge quantities and large variety of weapons in civilian possession;

(d) At present there is no uniform legal code to regulate the ownership of weapons by private citizens. The Albanian Government is working on the promulgation of a new and comprehensive law to identify the types of weapons permissible for private ownership by civilians along with clearly spelled-out measures against their misuse.

17. Among the report's recommendations are the following:

(a) That weapons collection in Albania needs to be related to rewards for communities that assist in the process through labour-intensive development projects of short duration;

(b) That an advocacy campaign, designed mostly by teachers and students, be carried out with the help of volunteers from the local communities throughout the country in the Albanian language;

(c) That a pilot project be developed rapidly and implemented urgently for voluntary weapons collection in the district of Gramshi in central Albania, which is estimated to account for roughly 8 to 10 per cent of the weapons and ammunition possessed by the entire civilian population after the crisis in 1997.

18. The evaluation mission believes that financial resources for the project can be raised through the poverty alleviation and job creation programmes of UNDP, the micro-credit facilities of the World Bank and voluntary contributions by interested Member States.

D. Meeting on small arms in Oslo

19. In a letter dated 16 July 1998 addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations transmitted the results of a meeting held in Oslo on 13 and 14 July on small arms and light weapons. At the invitation of the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, representatives of Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Zimbabwe attended the meeting.

20. The participants acknowledged the global role of the United Nations, especially in the context of the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/70 B, and the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, established pursuant to Assembly resolution 52/38 J. In particular, it was recognized that a sizable portion of all transfers of small arms and light weapons was illicit and increasingly linked to other transnational criminal activities. Immediate action could

focus on the prevention of illicit transfers and tighter control in connection with legal transfers.

E. United Nations conference on the illicit arms trade

21. In its resolution 52/38 J, entitled "Small arms", the General Assembly, in paragraph 4, requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the report of the Secretary-General on small arms (A/52/298, annex) and on the steps that they have taken to implement its recommendations, and, in particular, to seek their views on the recommendation concerning the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects in time for consideration by the Assembly at its fifty-third session.

22. Pursuant to that request, a note verbale was sent on 15 April 1998 to all Member States inviting them to provide information on the subject. Replies were received from Belarus, Canada, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Israel, Jordan, New Zealand, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Singapore, Turkey, the United Kingdom (on behalf of the European Union) and the United States. As reflected in the replies received to date, general support has been expressed for the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade.

23. The Government of Switzerland has offered to host such a conference under United Nations auspices in 2000.

F. Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

24. In 1995, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice asked the Vienna-based Centre for International Crime Prevention to carry out a study on firearm regulation for the purpose of crime prevention and public safety in civil society. The study, entitled *The United Nations International Study on Firearm Regulation*,[1] was submitted to the Commission at its seventh session, from 21 to 30 April 1998. The Commission proposed a draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council welcoming the results of the study and calling for further work towards the elaboration of an international instrument to combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms within the context of a United Nations convention against transnational organized crime.[2]

25. The model regulation is a set of guidelines requiring countries that adopt them to provide standardized import and export authorization information and, where appropriate, authorization information for in-transit shipments. Following up on the principle that the best way to combat illicit trafficking is to have more effective controls on the legal trade, the resolution calls for the discussion on an international instrument to include consideration of an effective system of import/export/in-transit authorizations; more stringent security during transportation; firearm identification (including serial numbers); enhanced information exchanges; and provisions for training and technical assistance.

26. While the majority of the regional and international initiatives listed above are focused on the illicit arms trade in the context of the excessive and destabilizing accumulations of small arms and light weapons manufactured to military specifications, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Centre for International Crime Prevention are examining the illicit trafficking and criminal misuse of firearms.

G. Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials

27. On 14 November 1997, the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials was adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) and signed by 29 of its members.

28. The purpose of the Inter-American Convention is (a) to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials; and (b) to promote and facilitate cooperation and exchange of information and experience among States parties to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials. Article XX of the Convention mandates States parties to establish a consultative committee responsible for such tasks as promoting the exchange of information on domestic legislation and administrative procedures of States parties; encouraging cooperation between national liaison authorities to detect suspected illicit exports and imports of firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials; and requesting from non-party States, when appropriate, information on the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related materials.

29. A total of 32 OAS member States have signed the Inter-American Convention to date, and Belize and Mexico have ratified it. In a statement in March 1998, the United Nations Secretary-General hailed the Inter-American Convention as a precedent and urged other Governments to explore such a possibility in the African context.

30. On 18 April, the presidents of the four South American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) comprising the economic trade organization Mercosur, together with the presidents of Bolivia and Chile, adopted a presidential statement on the combat against the production and the illicit trafficking of firearms, munitions, explosives and related materials. In the statement, the presidents called upon States to accelerate their own constitutional procedures in order for the Inter-American Convention to be ratified on a wider basis.

Notes

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.IV.2.

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 10* and corrigendum (E/1998/30 and Corr.1), draft resolution III. The Council adopted the resolution at its 44th meeting on 28 July 1998.

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General and complete disarmament: follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*

Note by the Secretary-General

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Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/38 O of 9 December 1997, entitled "Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", the General Assembly requested all States to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they had taken on the implementation of the resolution and nuclear disarmament, and requested the Secretary-General to apprise the Assembly of that information at its fifty-third session.

2. Pursuant to that request, information has been received thus far from Malaysia and New Zealand. Any additional information received from Member States will be issued as addenda to the present report.

Information received from Governments

Malaysia

[Original: English]
[16 July 1998]

1. Malaysia has signed (1968) and ratified (1970) the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It views the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a universal regime established by the international community to stem the spread of nuclear weapons, which continue to pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

2. Malaysia is taking active steps to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty before the end of July 1998. Malaysia believes that the Treaty constitutes an important contribution in the efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and towards the process of nuclear disarmament, thereby enhancing international peace and security.

3. Malaysia has been requested by the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to host a verification facility (radionuclide monitoring station) which is part of the international monitoring system of the Treaty. Arrangements are being made with the Preparatory Committee on the establishment of the said facility.

4. Malaysia has participated actively in international efforts aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament. Malaysia believes that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* on 8 July 1996 is a pronouncement by the highest international legal authority and is therefore of historic importance. Malaysia had presented two written submissions, in June 1994 and in June 1995 and had also made an oral presentation on 7 November 1995 to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in which it had strongly supported the argument that the possession of nuclear weapons and any threat and use of such weapons were illegal under international law. The opinion of the World Court should have a direct and positive impact on the policies and obligations of Member States in the area of nuclear disarmament and in the global efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

5. As a Member State that had taken the initiative to introduce the two relevant resolutions at the fifty-first and fifty-second sessions of the General Assembly on the ICJ advisory opinion, Malaysia will continue to work actively with other Members of the United Nations to ensure the implementation of the resolutions, in particular with regard to the obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

6. Malaysia's actions in the area of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament are guided by its consistent position and commitment towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, which have been articulated at the various international forums such as the May 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in New York and the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Auckland in November 1995, as well as at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the General Assembly.

7. Malaysia is fundamentally opposed to nuclear tests undertaken by any country. Malaysia strongly supports the overwhelming international opinion against such tests and has consistently issued official statements reiterating its continued opposition to nuclear testing, including those that were conducted recently despite the overwhelming adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

8. At the regional level, Malaysia has worked actively within the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to establish the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone which would contribute to further enhancing regional peace and security. The Zone, which entered into force on 27 March 1997, is an important contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament and reflects the genuine commitment of the States of South-east Asia towards achieving common disarmament goals. Malaysia had ratified the Treaty of Bangkok on 11 October 1996 and looks forward to the accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to that Treaty at an early date.

9. Malaysia, which is currently an observer to the Conference on Disarmament, applied for full membership of the Conference on 3 September 1993. Malaysia hopes to play a positive and constructive role by joining the Conference as a full member. Malaysia is dismayed at the continuing impasse at the Conference as a result of the differing positions between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States on both the approaches and substantive aspects of the work of the Conference, which in turn has raised questions about its future role and effectiveness. The continued paralysis of the Conference will not only undermine the usefulness and relevance of this single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament but also increase the risks of it being sidelined, as recent events have proved. Malaysia believes that the working methods and decision-making process of the Conference on Disarmament should be re-examined and improved so as to enhance its effectiveness as a negotiating forum. Malaysia hopes that the Conference on Disarmament can be the vehicle for negotiations on the nuclear weapons convention as envisaged in resolution 52/38 O.

10. Malaysia welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to revitalize the work of the United Nations in the disarmament field. Malaysia also welcomes the reconstitution of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs into the Department for Disarmament Affairs. Malaysia reiterates its view that the new department should give priority attention to nuclear disarmament, even as it grapples with other equally pressing aspects of disarmament in general.

11. Malaysia acknowledges the importance of the ongoing bilateral and unilateral arrangements aimed at reducing the current nuclear weapons stockpiles undertaken by the United States of America and the Russian Federation through the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) process. Bilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament have a place in the disarmament agenda and, in fact, have contributed significantly to the reduction of nuclear weapons, as evidenced by the START I and START II processes, which should logically lead to early negotiations for a START III. However, Malaysia believes that this does not absolve the nuclear-weapon States from their obligation to engage in multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, involving other members of the

international community, which have an equal responsibility to pursue the goals of nuclear disarmament.

New Zealand

[Original: English]
[30 June 1998]

1. New Zealand is firmly committed to nuclear disarmament. In particular, it has undertaken the following nuclear disarmament-related activities in the period from December 1997 to the end of June 1998:

1. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

2. On 30 June 1998, the Government introduced into Parliament the Nuclear-Test-Ban Bill, which will implement the obligations of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in New Zealand law. It is intended that the legislation be enacted before the end of 1998. This will enable ratification of the Treaty by New Zealand.

3. New Zealand is also continuing to work in the Preparatory Commission in Vienna and domestically on the steps needed to build up the international monitoring system for the Treaty. New Zealand will host six monitoring stations for the Treaty.

2. Conference on Disarmament

4. New Zealand supported the proposal by South Africa for the establishment within the Conference on Disarmament of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. While the establishment of such a committee has not as yet been agreed, there was agreement to hold intensive consultations on nuclear issues and to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear security assurances. New Zealand is participating fully in those deliberations.

5. New Zealand strongly supports and has consistently advocated the immediate commencement in the Conference on Disarmament of negotiations on a fissile material cutoff treaty. New Zealand regards this as an essential next step.

3. Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

6. As it had at the first session of the Preparatory Committee in 1997, at the second session, held at Geneva from 27 April to 8 May 1998, called on the nuclear-weapon States to commit themselves unequivocally to the elimination of nuclear weapons and to commence immediately the practical steps and negotiations which would contribute to that end. New Zealand also highlighted the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue and conclude negotiations on nuclear disarmament, which is the subject of paragraph 1 of resolution 52/38 O.

4. India/Pakistan Nuclear Testing

7. In numerous statements in multilateral bodies and in bilateral contacts, New Zealand has condemned, unequivocally, the recent nuclear testing by India and Pakistan. New Zealand has also called upon both countries to sign and ratify, unconditionally, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and engage immediately in negotiations on a fissile material cutoff treaty.

5. Ministerial Declaration on Nuclear Disarmament

8. Together with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden, New Zealand on 9 June 1998 issued the Declaration entitled "Towards a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: the Need for a New Agenda". The Declaration builds on the finding of the International Court of Justice. It also calls for interim steps to reduce the nuclear threat, such as those recommended by the Canberra Commission. It calls upon the nuclear-weapons-capable States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It also calls upon the nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-weapons-capable States to give a clear commitment to the speedy, final and total elimination of nuclear weapons. It calls for immediate practical steps, such as de-alerting and de-activating weapons; for negotiations on a binding No First Use agreement, and for negotiations on a ban on the production of fissile material. The text of the Declaration is reproduced below:

"Towards a Nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda

"Joint Declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden, adopted at Brasilia, Cairo, Dublin, Ljubljana, Mexico City, Pretoria, Stockholm and Wellington, on 9 June 1998

"We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa and Sweden have considered the continued threat to humanity represented by the perspective of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States, as well as by those three nuclear-weapons-capable States that have not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and the attendant possibility of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The seriousness of this predicament has been further underscored by the recent nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan.

"We fully share the conclusion expressed by the commissioners of the Canberra Commission in their Statement that 'the proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used – accidentally or by decision – defies credibility. The only complete defence is the elimination of nuclear weapons and assurance that they will never be produced again.'

"We recall that the General Assembly of the United Nations already in January 1946, in its very first resolution, unanimously called for a commission to make proposals for 'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.' While we can rejoice at the achievement of the international community in concluding total and global prohibitions on chemical and biological weapons by the Conventions of 1972 and 1993, we equally deplore the fact that the countless resolutions and initiatives which have been guided by similar objectives in respect of nuclear weapons in the past half-century remain unfulfilled.

"We can no longer remain complacent at the reluctance of the nuclear-weapon States and the three nuclear-weapons-capable States to take that fundamental and requisite step, namely a clear commitment to the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capability, and we urge them to take that step now.

"The vast majority of the membership of the United Nations has entered into legally binding commitments not to receive, manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. These undertakings have been made in the context of the corresponding legally binding commitments by the nuclear-weapon States to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. We are deeply concerned at the persistent reluctance of the nuclear-weapon States to approach their Treaty obligations as an urgent commitment to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons.

"In this connection we recall the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice in its 1996 advisory opinion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

"The international community must not enter the third millennium with the prospect that the maintenance of these weapons will be considered legitimate for the indefinite future, when the present juncture provides a unique opportunity to eradicate and prohibit them for all time. We therefore call upon the Governments of each of the nuclear-weapon States and the three nuclear-weapons-capable States to commit themselves unequivocally to the elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons capability and to agree to start work immediately on the practical steps and negotiations required for its achievement.

"We agree that the measures resulting from such undertakings leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons will begin with those States that have the largest arsenals. But we also stress the importance that they be joined in a seamless process by those with lesser arsenals at the appropriate juncture. The nuclear-weapon States should immediately begin to consider steps to be taken to this effect.

"In this connection we welcome both the achievements to date and the future promise of the START process as an appropriate bilateral, and subsequently plurilateral mechanism including all the nuclear-weapon States, for the practical dismantlement and destruction of nuclear armaments undertaken in pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

"The actual elimination of nuclear arsenals, and the development of requisite verification regimes, will of necessity require time. But there are a number of practical steps that the nuclear-weapon States can, and should, take immediately. We call upon them to abandon present hair-trigger postures by proceeding to de-alerting and de-activating their weapons. They should also remove non-strategic nuclear weapons from deployed sites. Such measures will create beneficial conditions for continued disarmament efforts and help prevent inadvertent, accidental or unauthorized launches.

"In order for the nuclear disarmament process to proceed, the three nuclear-weapons-capable States must clearly and urgently reverse the pursuit of their respective nuclear weapons development or deployment and refrain from any actions which could undermine the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament. We call upon them, and all other States that have not yet done so, to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and take the necessary measures which flow from adherence to that instrument. We likewise call upon them to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions.

"An international ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (cut-off) would further underpin the process towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As agreed in 1995 by the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, negotiations on such a convention should commence immediately.

"Disarmament measures alone will not bring about a world free from nuclear weapons. Effective international cooperation to prevent the proliferation of these weapons is vital and must be enhanced through, *inter alia*, the extension of controls over all fissile material and other relevant components of nuclear weapons. The emergence of any new nuclear-weapon State, as well as any non-State entity in a position to produce or otherwise acquire such weapons, seriously jeopardizes the process of eliminating nuclear weapons.

"Other measures must also be taken pending the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. Legally binding instruments should be developed with respect to a joint no-first-use undertaking between the nuclear-weapon States and as regards non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, so called negative security assurances.

"The conclusion of the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the Antarctic Treaty have steadily excluded nuclear weapons from entire regions of the world. The further pursuit, extension and establishment of such zones, especially in regions of tension, such as the Middle East and South Asia, represents a significant contribution to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

"These measures all constitute essential elements which can and should be pursued in parallel: by the nuclear-weapon States among themselves, and by the nuclear-weapon States together with the non-nuclear-weapon States, thus providing a road map towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

"The maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons will require the underpinnings of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments.

"We, on our part, will spare no efforts to pursue the objectives outlined above. We are jointly resolved to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. We firmly hold that the determined and rapid preparation for the post-nuclear era must start now."

Luiz Felipe **Lampreia**
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Don **McKinnon**
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Lena **Hjelm-Wallen**
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